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Central Intelligence Agency

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Washington, D.C. 20505

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The Honorable William S. Broomfield
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Broomfield:

I have just finished reading your submission in the Congressional Record of 4 October 1984 on "Rebuilding Our Human Intelligence Capability." The Executive Branch has taken concrete steps over the past three years to rebuild our intelligence collection capabilities, especially in the human collection area. I hasten to add that the Legislative Branch, in the form of our Oversight Committees, has been most supportive in terms of this rebuilding effort.

As you point out in the Congressional Record, this rebuilding effort cannot be accomplished overnight. It is a long term cooperative project which, in the end, will improve the Agency's ability to collect the intelligence which is vital to the protection of our national interests.

Your public support of this rebuilding effort is most gratifying to me personally, and welcomed by career professionals in the Central Intelligence Agency. We are grateful for your public expressions of continued support.

Sincerely,

WJ/ Bill

William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence

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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—*Extensions of Remarks**October 4, 1984***REBUILDING OUR HUMAN INTELLIGENCE (HUMINT) CAPABILITY****HON. WILLIAM S. BROOMFIELD**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 1984

● Mr. BROOMFIELD. Mr. Speaker, the controversy over President Reagan's remarks that were perceived by many as linking the suicide bombings of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut to inadequate intelligence has provoked a number of comments that must be refuted.

First, it is misleading to contend that only CIA headquarters personnel were affected by the reductions in force made during the period Admiral Turner was heading the CIA. It is true that most of the individuals involved happened to be assigned to headquarters when the cuts occurred. One must bear in mind, however, that almost all of these individuals belonged to the CIA's operations component which periodically rotates such personnel between the field and headquarters. Therefore, these actions reduced the number of people who could be rotated to the field upon completion of their headquarter tours.

Second, it is unrealistic to believe that experienced case officers can be replaced overnight by neophytes without any loss of intelligence capability. Indeed, Admiral Turner ultimately realized this as he was forced to hire back on contract some of the individuals that he prematurely retired in order to remedy certain intelligence gaps. He learned the hard way that the human intelligence business is not like an assembly plant of semiskilled workers who you can hire and fire indiscriminately without any loss of productivity or effectiveness. As veteran intelligence officers will tell you, it often takes a good 5 years to produce a competent field operative.

Altogether, Turner eliminated 820 positions over a 2-year period. Needless to say, morale plummeted as the result of these moves and Turner himself now reportedly regrets the insensitive manner in which some of the old hands were let go.

Third, Bill Casey and President Reagan deserve credit for taking measures since 1981 which have significantly restored morale in the operations directorate of the CIA. In particular, the Human Intelligence (Humint) area has been given special attention and the rate of increase in funding for intelligence even exceeds that for the Defense budget. Congress also earns kudos as it has approved these increases without exceptions.

Finally, as far as the Carter administration is concerned, there was a net decrease in spending and manpower until 1979 when in the wake of Iran and Afghanistan it began to request increases. In evaluating this period, we should also remember the severe inflation that occurred during the Carter era. In this regard, knowledgeable sources point out that the intelligence budget did not keep pace with the spiraling costs of the sophisticated technology sought during this period.

(Incidentally, Walter Mondale served on the Select Intelligence Committee chaired by the late Frank Church. By virtue of that service, he should have been aware of U.S. intelligence needs and advised Carter accordingly.)

In short, Mr. Speaker, the President was correct when he stated that our human intelligence collection capability was seriously damaged in the decade preceding his administration. Rebuilding that capability cannot be achieved overnight, but the efforts that have been made in recent years to restore that capability will increase significantly the prospect of the United States more effectively combating terrorism.●